



AUGUST 10, 2011

HEALTH INFORMATION

Health officials investigate case of inhalational anthrax

Public Health Officials say the case does not represent an increased risk to the general public

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) sent out a news release yesterday regarding a case of inhalational anthrax in an individual who is believed to have acquired the infection from exposure to soil and animal remains. The individual was hospitalized in Minnesota after traveling through North Dakota, Montana, Wyoming and South Dakota. Because these cases are so rare, people should not be discouraged from traveling to areas where anthrax can be found naturally in the environment.

While the source of exposure is still under investigation, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) investigated this matter jointly with MDH and no evidence suggesting it was a criminal or terrorist act was obtained.

While this case does not represent an increased risk of anthrax to the public, it is an important reminder that although rare, anthrax cases do occur and providers should remain familiar with signs and symptoms of all three types of anthrax disease (cutaneous, gastrointestinal and inhalational).

Information about anthrax can be found on the North Dakota Department of Health's website at www.ndhealth.gov/Disease/Documents/faqs/Anthrax.pdf or by calling the Division of Disease Control at 701.328.2378. Additional provider information can be found on the CDC's website at <http://emergency.cdc.gov/agent/anthrax/anthrax-hcp-factsheet.asp>.

Categories of Health Alert messages:

- *Health Alert conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.*
- *Health Advisory provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.*
- *Health Update provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; no immediate action necessary.*
- *Health Information provides general information that is not necessarily considered to be of an emergent nature.*

This message is being sent to local public health units, clinics, hospitals, physicians, tribal health, North Dakota Nurses Association, North Dakota Long Term Care Association, North Dakota Healthcare Association, North Dakota Medical Association, and hospital public information officers.